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AUTHOR Ransome, Whitney
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ABSTRACT

This document provides a brief overview on the short-changing of girls in the education system. The paper suggests one solution may lie in the single-sex school for girls. Girls' schools are united in a long-standing commitment to learning environments that place girls first and foremost. All mentors and roles models provided are female, so that the chilly classroom climates are eliminated. A short review of the research on present practice suggests that females are treated as second-class citizens in many classrooms. Several benefits are suggested for participating in an all girls' school. (EH)

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What Every Girl In School Needs To Know

ED 380 315

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SCHOOL WORK

Compositions

Name Your Name

School Your School

Grade Your Grade

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What Every Girl Needs to Know

Today, as never before, opportunities abound for the young woman who wants to be well-educated, self-reliant, ambitious, self-confident, and successful.

Seem Hard to Believe? *No wonder.*

Just read the findings from recent national research. Schools have been short-changing girls all across America. The messages in newspapers, on TV, in Doonesbury cartoons, and even from Barbie herself can be discouraging for girls.

- less attention from teachers
- fewer chances to participate in class discussions
- lower teacher expectations
- little encouragement in areas like math and science
- inadequate sports offerings and facilities
- the absence of female perspectives
- limited access to leadership positions
- too few teachers who really understand the way girls learn.

Doonesbury BY GARRY TRUDEAU

HOW'S NURSERY SCHOOL GOING, HONEY?
OKAY, I GUESS. EXCEPT I NEVER GET TO SAY ANY-THING...
4-29
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, ALEX?
THE DORKY BOYS GET ALL THE ATTEN-TION. MRS. JASPER ISN'T FAIR ABOUT LETTING THE GIRLS ANSWER QUESTIONS.
HMM...
MAYBE I SHOULD HAVE A LITTLE TALK WITH HER.
MOM, SHE'LL NEVER CALL ON YOU! SEND DADDY.

DOONESBURY copyright 1982 G.B. Trudeau Reprinted with permission of Universal Press Syndicate. All rights reserved.

Does it have to be this way for you? *Absolutely not!*

In ever increasing numbers, girls are giving serious consideration to a kind of school that can make all the difference in how they learn, grow, and succeed both now and in later life.

What kind of school is that? *An all-girls school.*

For generations, girls' schools have served students of many abilities, interests, talents, and backgrounds. What unites these schools is a long-standing commitment to learning environments that place girls first and foremost. What sets them apart from other educational settings is an in-depth understanding of how girls learn and succeed. At a girls' school it's not just equal opportunity, but every opportunity. All the speakers, players, writers, singers, athletes, doers, and leaders are girls. Mentors and role models are not hard to find. There are no chilly classroom climates to endure, no subtle signs of second-class citizenship.

Is a girls' school the place for you?

Follow a few easy steps and see for yourself ...

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~ Step #1 • Listen to the Experts ~

At Harvard

• "Girls' schools provide an environment that not only is good in and of itself, but that in its redefinition of competitiveness and collaboration, of autonomy and connectedness, presents a model that other schools do well to emulate."

~ Dr. David Riesman ~

• "Girls must … hold on to their own ways of hearing and seeing."

~ Dr. Carol Gilligan ~

At the University of Michigan

• "Girls at single-sex schools surpass their coed peers in reading, writing, and science. They also demonstrate higher educational aspirations, spend more time on homework, and are more likely to achieve later in their careers."

~ Drs. Anthony Byrk and Valerie Lee ~

At American University

• "A boy calls out, a teacher listens. If it's a girl, she's told, 'Raise your hand if you want to speak.' When girls go to single-sex schools, they stop being the audience and become the players."

~ Drs. Myra and David Sadker ~

At the American Association of University Women

• "The educational system is not meeting girls' needs. Girls and boys enter school roughly equal in measured ability. Twelve years later, girls have fallen behind their male classmates in key areas such as higher level math and science, confidence,

and self-esteem. Girls are one-half our future. We must move them from the sidelines to the center of the educational reform debate."

~ *AAUW Report*, How Schools Shortchange Girls ~

At the US Department of Education

• "The continuing underrepresentation of women in mathematics-related and scientific careers has led many earlier proponents of gender-neutrality to consider rethinking how US society educates women and encourages their pursuit in such careers... . We conclude there is empirical support for the view that single-sex schools may accrue positive outcomes particularly for young women."

~ *Single-Sex Schooling: Perspectives from Practice and Research* ~

Office of Educational Research and Improvement (1992 Draft)

At Girls' Schools

• "As a college professor I could identify students from girls' schools with a 90 percent accuracy rate on the first day of class. They were the young women whose hands shot up in the air, who were not afraid to defend their positions, and who assumed that I would be interested in their perspective."

~ *Robin Robertson, girls' school principal* ~

• "I realize how much a girls' school environment has given me. When so many classmates believe in your abilities, you can't help but develop a tremendous sense of self worth."

~ *Alli Stockman, girls' school student* ~

25
7
11

At Girls' Schools

• "When the student body is female and more than half the teachers are women, there is an unspoken validation of female norms and their consequences. Also apparent is an instant friendliness …a sense of spontaneity that doesn't disappear in front of adults…a sense of respect and affection from students to teachers and vice versa…a deep sense of belonging."

~ Rachel Belash, head of school ~

• "At a girls' school, I found my voice. I learned to speak up for myself and ask questions. You may be shy when you arrive, but by the time you leave, you're a different person."

~ Susan James, girls' school alumna ~

• "I never dreamed what a difference a girls' school could make. My daughters grew intellectually and came away from their academic experience fully prepared to meet the challenges of college, career, and community life. I was changed as well. My expectations for them were enhanced and heightened. Their girls' school education helped them set new horizons, allowed for unparalleled growth, and ultimately showed them how to be both competent and confident."

~ Chris Montgomery, girls' school parent ~

~ Step #2 • Get the Answers ~

To Some Very Important Questions

Q **Why is a girls' school a good option for me?**

A *Because everything that you do and want is taken seriously.*

Girls' schools set high standards for their students while recognizing that each girl will excel at her own pace. There is a freedom to express oneself — to speak out, be heard, and engage in demanding discussions. Students are encouraged and challenged to explore a subject, expand upon a theory, test out a new idea. Girls offer opinions, ask questions, debate issues, defend points of view. You will know it's OK to take intellectual risks because the classroom is an arena for cooperative discovery. It's also where you'll discuss critical questions about moral and ethical values. Self-confidence and self-esteem come from experiencing success; being successful is what going to a girls' school is all about.

Q **Do I have to be a superstar to attend a girls' school?**

A *No, but you're likely to become one!*

Achievement comes as much from having the right attitude and equal access as it does from having the "right stuff." As one girls' school headmistress said, "...girls thrive in girls' schools. Not just the brains and the beauties and the jocks, but every girl. Quiet girls are called on, slow learners are encouraged, girls of many sizes perform in dance class, leaders are rewarded, each voice is heard." There is great diversity among the young women who attend girls' schools. There are no stereotypes.

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TO SPILL?

Q What are the teachers like?

A *Outstanding in many special ways.*

After all, they have extensive experience teaching girls. They understand the ways you will learn best and set high expectations for you. They know what it will take for you to succeed both now and in later life. Teachers are dedicated, friendly, hard working, caring, supportive, and deeply interested in their subject matter and their students. You'll find them easy to talk with and easy to find when you have a question or an issue you want to explore. They are the ones you will turn to again and again for inspiration, encouragement, ideas, and understanding. They will come to know you well and will support whatever it is you most want to do and become. Because your classes are small (7 to 1 student/teacher ratio compared to 17 to 1 in most other schools), you will receive the kind of attention and excellent instruction you so richly deserve.

Q What do I do when I'm not in class?

A *Anything and everything.*

Sports, the arts, drama, music, debate, student government, publications, community service and countless other activities are as much a part of your education as your academics. Here again the choices are many, the opportunities abound. You will both choose and be guided to a wide array of interesting projects, teams, committees, and productions.

Q What about friends?

A *They will be easy to come by.*

Friends and lifelong friendships are one of the hallmarks of an all-girls school.

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For many it is the defining memory of their girls' school experience. In a close-knit, safe community, with small classes and myriad extracurricular activities, friendships evolve naturally. Saying goodbye to acquaintances from an old school can be hard. One thing is certain; your list of friends will be enhanced, not diminished.

Q **Without boys, how can a girls' school prepare me for the real world?**

A *By helping you take charge of your own world first.*

Finding your place among others, discovering your true self, is made easier when there are only girls. Have you ever gone to a girls' camp or been a girl scout or in a girls-only church group? Add the challenge and excitement of academics and you'll have some sense of what it will be like. Recent research has revealed that the way girls learn, the way they act and interact, is different from boys — not better or worse — just different. Girls' schools offer girls the opportunity to learn ***their*** way, with courses and teaching strategies specifically designed for how girls learn best. The real world needs people who are competent, confident, caring, skilled, articulate, and prepared to meet the challenges of today. A girls' school education will give you a head start in all these areas.

Q **Will I have activities that involve boys?**

A *Of course!*

Every school welcomes boys into selected academic, artistic, extracurricular, or social events. Some schools have coordinate arrangements with boys' or coed schools. Dances, debates, plays, music groups, academic forums, sporting events, and community service projects are just a few examples of the kinds of activities that often bring boys and girls together. The good news is that there is time to be on your own and time to interact...the best of both worlds.

Q Will I be as prepared for college as the girls who go to coed schools?

A *In many cases even better!*

A recent survey of graduates of girls' schools showed that they are more motivated and accomplished and have higher aspirations than their peers at other schools. In a single-sex setting, girls focus on the subjects and options that are most important for them without the distraction of boys. You will be exposed to a wider range of opportunities and female role models, have your expectations heightened in a "can-do" environment, and be valued for who you are.

Q Where will I live if I go to a girls' school?

A *Around the corner and around the world.*

You may choose a girls' day school which is just a short commute from your own home. Or your search may take you to a boarding school where you will live where you learn. In either case, you will have classmates from other neighborhoods, cities, and even other countries. Which ever it is — boarding, day, or a school that combines both — you can be certain of several things: you will experience a strong sense of community among people who share your interest in academic achievement.

Q Is every girls' school the same?

A *In just one way.*

They believe girls deserve schools of their own.

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~ Step #3 • Talk to Your Parents ~

Share With Them Some Important Facts About Girls' Schools:

Preparation for College and Career Top the List

- Almost 100% of girls' school graduates go on to college.
- 7 out of 10 graduates cite academic quality and career preparation as the major benefits of a girls' school education.
- Close to three-quarters of alumnae in one survey report working full or part-time; 77% of these women are professionals or hold executive positions in business and believe that single-sex schooling helped prepare them for balancing their professional and personal lives.

Scholarships Make Girls' Schools Affordable

- Over $25 million in tuition aid was awarded to deserving families last year, giving thousands of girls access to a quality education.

Participation in Math and Science is the Norm

- Close to 100% of girls' school students take four years of math — almost double the national average.
- Graduates of girls' schools pursue careers in math, science, and technology four times more often than their peers from other schools.

Thousands of Families Pursue the Option of Girls' Schools

- More than 40,000 families inquire each year about one or more girls' schools.

~ Step #4 • Check Us Out! ~

We can help you find your way to some of the best places to learn. The National Coalition of Girls' Schools is an organization of 65 girls' boarding and day, private and public schools from across the United States with girls' school affiliates in Canada and Australia. While differing in history, tradition, location, academic rigor, extracurricular activities, religious affiliation, size, and philosophies, Coalition schools share a core belief in and commitment to the values and advantages of an all-girls school.

Your Next Step?

Easy! ➤ Just fill out this card, tear at the line, and send — We'll do the rest!

_____ Yes, I want to receive a free directory of the nation's leading schools for girls.

_____ Yes, I want to learn more about girls, math, and science.

_____ Yes, I want to be on the Coalition's mailing list.

Name: _____

Address: _____

_____

Mail To:

THE NATIONAL COALITION OF GIRLS' SCHOOLS

228 MAIN STREET

CONCORD, MASSACHUSETTS 01742

PHONE: (508) 369-1484 • FAX: (508) 369-3452